

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

68-0136  
PPB

March 11, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF  
DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

I have today approved a recommendation by the Secretary of Commerce, submitted under provisions of Public Law 89-306, that the United States of America Standard Code for Information Interchange be adopted as a Federal standard.

In my memorandum to you of June 28, 1966, I stressed the need for achieving, with industry cooperation, greater compatibility among computers. The earlier adoption of the Standard Code for Information Interchange as a voluntary standard by the United States of America Standards Institute reflects a national concern with this need.

The adoption of this code as a Federal standard is a major step toward minimizing costly incompatibility among our vast Federal computer and telecommunications data systems.

I have also approved recommendations of the Secretary of Commerce regarding standards for recording the Standard Code for Information Interchange on magnetic tapes and paper tapes when they are used in computer operations.

All computers and related equipment configurations brought into the Federal Government inventory on and after July 1, 1969, must have the capability to use the Standard Code for Information Interchange and the formats prescribed by the magnetic tape and paper tape standards when these media are used.

The standard code will be used as the basic code in those networks of the National Communications System whose primary function is either the transmission of record communications or the transmission of data related to information processing. The standard will be implemented on a time-phased basis that is to be specified in National Communications System long-range plans.

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The heads of departments and agencies are authorized to waive the use of these standards only under compelling circumstances of particular applications. Such waiver is to be coordinated with the Department of Commerce (National Bureau of Standards) before it is exercised so that the Department may effectively accomplish the goals of the Federal computer equipment standards program conducted under Public Law 89-306.

The Department of Commerce will provide you with the details of these standards and their application.

